



# Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26

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# Foreword

SQA has an important role to play in supporting the Scottish Government to listen to the needs, fears and wishes of care experienced people and to be proactive and determined in our collective efforts to meet them. I am delighted to introduce SQA's third Corporate Parenting Plan, covering 2023–26, which demonstrates our continuing commitment as a proud corporate parent.

Every child has the right to education and while SQA does not determine the right to education in Scotland, we do have a responsibility to provide assessment and certification of qualifications. As a good corporate parent, we want care experienced learners to fulfil their potential and, to do this, we need to consider their needs as a priority in everything we do. SQA will continue to align with [The Promise](#) and the strong message that all children should grow up loved, safe and respected. We will do this through taking a children's rights-based approach to the actions in this plan and seek ways that we can make a positive impact through our employment and development opportunities, and by celebrating the achievements of care experienced learners.

Education reform and the organisation that will replace SQA in 2025 brings further opportunities for change, but we can't work in isolation. We need to listen to care experienced individuals and their journey, while continuously identifying opportunities to work in partnership with other corporate parents and external partners.

As we move forward with this new Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26, I am committed to welcoming every opportunity to listen and make any changes that are necessary to enhance the experience of care experienced learners.

**Fiona Robertson**  
**SQA Chief Executive**

# Introduction

## About SQA

As Scotland's accreditation and awarding body, SQA provides products, services, skills, training and education — all of which have a positive impact on individuals, organisations, and society. We embed our values — progressive, enabling, and trusted — in all our work.

Our purpose is to help individuals fulfil their full potential while maintaining standards across Scottish education. We are an executive non-departmental public body that reports to Scottish Ministers and the Scottish Parliament established under the [Education \(Scotland\) Act 1996](#). SQA is sponsored by the [Scottish Government's Education Reform Directorate](#).

Our remit and function are outlined in the amended [Scottish Qualifications Act 2002](#). With a current staff of approximately 1,000 based in Glasgow and Dalkeith, SQA engages with learners, schools, colleges and training providers across Scotland, the rest of the UK and internationally. We develop, maintain, and improve a framework of qualifications, and set and maintain standards for many other awarding bodies and accredited qualifications.

SQA Accreditation:

- ◆ accredits qualifications other than degrees
- ◆ approves and quality-assures awarding bodies that plan to enter people for these qualifications

As an accrediting body, SQA sets and maintains standards for many other awarding bodies, and for accredited qualifications such as Scottish Vocational Qualifications, which provide evidence that learners can do their jobs well. (These can be studied in colleges or in the workplace.) This role is similar to the role carried out by Ofqual in other parts of the UK. As the Scottish qualifications' regulator, the accreditation function is branded as SQA Accreditation to minimise any potential confusion with the awarding function of SQA.

SQA (awarding body):

- ◆ devises and develops qualifications
- ◆ validates qualifications (ensures they are well written and meet the needs of learners and teaching practitioners) and reviews qualifications to ensure they are up to date
- ◆ arranges for, assists in, and carries out, the assessment of learners taking SQA qualifications
- ◆ quality-assures education and training establishments that offer SQA qualifications
- ◆ issues certificates to learners

We help people to achieve and fulfil their potential. We do this by providing them with credible recognition of the skills and knowledge they have demonstrated, which in turn supports their choices in life and work. SQA provides opportunities for success for thousands of learners each year, positively impacting on them, their families and on society.

## What is corporate parenting?

A corporate parent is the name given to an organisation or person who has special responsibilities to care experienced people. The term 'care experienced' refers to anyone who is currently in care or has been for any length of time regardless of their age. This care may have been provided in many different settings, such as:

- ◆ kinship care
- ◆ looked after at home
- ◆ residential care
- ◆ foster care
- ◆ secure care
- ◆ living with adoptive parents



### Kinship Care

Living with a relative who is not your mum or dad



### Looked After At Home

With the help of social work



### Residential Care

Living in a residential home or school



### Foster Care

living with foster carers



### Secure Care

Living in a secure accommodation



### Adoption

Living with adoptive parents

Source: [About Us - Who Cares? Scotland \(whocaresscotland.org\)](http://whocaresscotland.org)

Corporate parents have specific duties and responsibilities towards care experienced people up to the age of 26. Many corporate parents go further and extend their support and policies to care experienced adults (those above the age of 26) recognising the long-lasting consequences being in care can have into adulthood. When people leave care, it doesn't leave them — care has a lifelong impact and care experience is a lifelong identity. Care experienced people of all ages must be seen and heard as a group of rights holders and given support and protection throughout their lifetime if we are to reduce the inequalities they face.

When the state takes on a parental role for a child or young person, we all have a part to play in their wellbeing. Corporate parents have a responsibility in ensuring the rights of care experienced people are upheld, and that they have the best chances and outcomes in life. We believe our corporate parenting duties are an opportunity to carry out some of the supportive roles that parents fulfil. While we can't fulfil the full parental role, we can improve the lives of the care experienced people we are responsible for through support and listening to their needs.

As a proud corporate parent, SQA will do everything we can to help care experienced people reach their full potential, celebrating their achievements by ensuring that all aspects of their development are nurtured.

## Language matters

We generally use the term 'care experienced' throughout our Corporate Parenting Plan and work. We understand this to be an inclusive term that many in the care experienced community prefer, as it speaks to the diverse range of experiences and the lifelong impact of care experience.

It is important to mention we may come across legal terminology such as 'looked after' or 'care leaver'. The legal definitions are:

### **'Looked after'**

[The Children \(Scotland\) Act 1995](#) defines 'looked after' children as those in the care of their local authority. It is a legal status in which the local authority has specific duties.

### **'Care leaver'**

A 'care leaver' is a young person who stops being looked after on, or at any time after, their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. We know that the term 'care leaver' can feel reductive, as it fails to capture the lifelong impact of having been in care. Care experienced people themselves have shared the sentiment that, 'we might leave care, but care doesn't leave us'.

### **'Looked after child'**

This is often abbreviated to 'LAC' (pronounced 'lack'). Who Cares? Scotland's work with the care experienced community confirms it is confusing for young people being referred to as 'LAC' and, in some cases, leads care experienced people to question if they themselves are 'lacking'.

The Promise identified a need for organisations to commit to getting it right when it comes to language.

#### **Language**

Organisations that have responsibilities towards care experienced children and young people will be able to demonstrate that they are embedding destigmatising language and practices across the way they work.

Source: The Promise (p. 87)

## Trauma-informed practice

We know that while the experience of care can be positive, it can also be a complex experience that can often put children and young people at increased risk of trauma. The Scottish Government have created a [trauma-informed practice toolkit](#), which provides context to the importance of organisations adopting a trauma-informed approach to designing services. Alongside [NHS Education for Scotland](#), they have also created a [National Trauma Training Programme](#). The Promise discusses the impact that trauma has on care experienced people, and how important it is that more organisations adopt a trauma-informed approach.

## Good parent/corporate parent

Throughout [The Promise: Scotland's Independent Care Review](#) there are demands that Scotland be a 'good parent' for those it is responsible for. We use the term 'corporate parent', but it is important to note that the Care Review heard from young people themselves that this term feels demeaning and like a cold, process-driven relationship.

Who Cares? Scotland acknowledges that 'corporate' ultimately means: 'of or shared by a whole group, and not just a single member'. When we consider this, we see that corporate parenting is more about collective support — providing a network of support for care experienced people.

We believe that corporate parenting is not just a responsibility — it is a real opportunity to help improve the futures of care experienced people. We are committed to being a good corporate parent.

## Our duties as a corporate parent

The duties under the [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#) mean that SQA must:

- ◆ be alert to matters which might adversely affect the wellbeing of looked after children and young people
- ◆ assess the needs of looked after children and young people for services and support we provide
- ◆ promote the interests of looked after children and young people
- ◆ provide opportunities for looked after children and young people to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing
- ◆ take action appropriately to ensure looked after children and young people access these opportunities and make use of our services and support
- ◆ take any other action we consider appropriate to improve our functions to meet the needs of looked after children and young people



Source: [Centre for excellence for looked after children in Scotland, Corporate Parenting: Enabling Implementation of part 9.](#)

Corporate parents must also publish, and regularly review, detailed corporate parenting plans and reports, collaborate with other corporate parents, follow directions and guidance, and provide relevant information to Scottish Ministers.

SQA embraces these duties, and we are committed to helping care experienced people realise the brighter futures they deserve by helping them unlock their potential. We understand that considering the needs of those people with experience of care can't be seen as the responsibility of one individual, team or directorate, but that we must work across all directorates to meet our responsibilities as a corporate parent.

## Children's rights

The [United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (UNCRC) is the internationally mandated children's rights treaty that informs our strategies and programmes. It sets out the rights that all children and young people in the UK have and outlines what children need to give them the best chance of growing up happy, healthy and safe. It also explains how adults and governments should work together to make sure all children can access all their rights.

The UNCRC defines the child as a person under 18 years of age. Additionally, duties under the UNCRC include young care experienced people up to the age of 26 years.

SQA has an important role to play in supporting the Scottish Government's vision to embed children's rights in all aspects of society. This makes a rights-based approach an essential



part of the work delivered by corporate parents. As a corporate parent, we need to have a good understanding of the rights entitled to children and young people under the UNCRC and make sure our everyday decisions are grounded in these rights. This will reflect our purpose of helping people to fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions.

We support [‘The Promise Plan 21–24’](#) and the fundamental principle of children’s rights.

*‘Scotland must respect, uphold, champion and defend the rights of children and recognise that their rights are most often realised through relationships with loving, attentive caregivers.’*

*Scotland must fully incorporate and uphold the UNCRC. Scotland must recognise children’s status as human beings with a distinct set of rights. Children are not passive recipients of care. The system must revolve around the rights of the child so their health, education and right to play (for example) are never compromised by contact with the ‘care system’. The system must uphold their rights at every turn.’*

Source: [The Promise Independent Care Review](#)

While each right listed under the UNCRC is important, there are four general principles underpinning all other rights:



**For rights to be applied without discrimination (article 2)**

**For the best interests of the child to be a primary consideration (article 3)**

**The right to the life, survival and development (article 6)**

**The right to express a view and have that view given due weight (article 12)**

Source: Adapted from [Stage 1 Report on United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(Incorporation\) \(Scotland\) Bill | Scottish Parliament](#) (published December 2020).

We have embedded children's rights into our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26 and will adopt a rights-based approach to meeting our commitments. Children’s Rights And

Wellbeing Impact Assessments will be a key tool to ensure that SQA respects, protects and fulfils the rights of care experienced children and young people.

## Education reform

The Scottish Government is reforming Scotland's education system and the way qualifications are being provided. The reform programme contains a number of distinct but connected strands:

- ◆ the creation of the new qualifications body, independent inspectorate and national education agency
- ◆ the review of qualifications and assessment led by Professor Louise Hayward
- ◆ the national discussion on the future vision for education
- ◆ the review of skills delivery led by James Withers

The Scottish Government will respond to the [Hayward](#) and [Withers](#) independent reviews in autumn 2023. These responses will inform the ongoing [Education Reform Programme](#), which will include the establishment of a new qualifications body that will replace SQA.

Care experience must be taken into consideration during the reform process and given the time, space and thought that is deserved. We are committed to pursuing partnership opportunities that allow us to hear the voice of care experienced people and determine what their needs are through education reform. Education reform has the opportunity to make a real difference to care experienced learners by listening to them, taking the context in which they learn into consideration, embedding a children's rights-based approach and ensuring the right to education is truly realised.

Education reform and the organisation that will replace SQA brings further opportunities for change and for ensuring children and their rights are at the heart of the education system. We will ensure our responsibilities to care experienced people are reflected when developing SQA's Children's Rights Framework for the new body.

SQA will continue to deliver for learners, schools, colleges and customers while working with others to ensure a smooth transition to the new qualifications body in 2025.

## The Promise: Scotland's Independent Care Review

Scotland's Independent Care Review was launched in October 2016 — a Scotland-wide commitment to bring about root and branch improvements in the care system.

In February 2020, the Care Review delivered a powerful and clear message: care must have love and nurture at its heart. Keeping The Promise means ensuring all children grow up loved, safe and respected so they can realise their full potential.



[The Promise](#), or the [Pinky Promise](#), as it's known to young people, now refers to the long-term change programme for the improvement of Scotland's care system spanning 10 years (2021 to 2030). Work to #KeepThePromise between 2021 and 2030 is being shaped by a series of three plans, each lasting for three years and outlining the priorities and action across that period. [Plan 21–24](#) outlined Scotland's route map for the first three years, providing key priorities and areas of focus under which corporate parents and other organisations will work to achieve the required change.

Those are:

- ◆ **What matters to children and families:** by 2024 organisations should be able to demonstrate that they are operating from the perspective of children and families, rather than the perspective internal to the 'system'.
- ◆ **Listening:** by 2024 organisations that have responsibilities towards care experienced children and families, should be able to demonstrate that they are embedding what they have heard from them.
- ◆ **Poverty:** by 2024 organisations should be able to demonstrate how they are ensuring that they play their part in mitigating the impacts of poverty.
- ◆ **Children's rights:** by 2024 organisations that have responsibilities towards care experienced children people should be able to demonstrate that their rights under the UNCRC are being consistently upheld.
- ◆ **Language:** by 2024 organisations that have responsibilities towards care experienced people should be able to demonstrate that they are embedding destigmatising language and practices across the way they work.

The Promise has a strong focus on educating communities on care experience and the key roles of schools in the lives of care experienced children and young people. Schools provide an ideal setting to influence and improve attitudes, understanding and perceptions in the next generation, and to support a ripple effect from that learning within the wider school community. School pupils will grow up to become adult community members — they are the future employers, the future workforce, and future corporate parents ([Education Outcomes for Looked After Children 2019/20](#)).

The Promise has informed the development of our new Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26 and in helping to shape the commitments we will make to care experienced children, young people and adults.

[Who Cares? Scotland's 'Our Communities that Care' whole-school approach](#) creates conditions for care experienced children and young people to be nurtured and supported in their schools and communities across Scotland, through local training and awareness-raising activities.



Source: [Who Cares? Scotland Communities that Care Project](#)

By investing in the education of school pupils through [Who Cares? Scotland's Communities that Care programme](#), when their values are most susceptible to change, the next generation is learning about how to create a Scotland that ensures that everyone can succeed and belong. SQA will embrace the 'whole-school approach' in how we implement our plan.

## Paving the Way

Who Cares? Scotland's interim report about The Promise is called '[Paving the Way](#)' (June 2022). This report is the beginning of their understanding of what some of their members think about the Scottish Government's [Keeping the Promise implementation plan](#).

As a proud corporate parent, it is important that we engage with this report to support implementation of The Promise and consider the asks directly from care experienced people.

## The care experienced community in Scotland

It is important we look beyond the statistics and remember that every care experienced person is unique and can achieve their potential in education with the right support and guidance. All pupils have needs when it comes to learning, and learners with care experience are no different. It is important this is at the forefront of our minds and informs our Corporate Parenting Plan and commitments.

According to the [Scottish Government's Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland: 2021 to 2022 report](#) (published April 2023), on 31 July 2022, 14,627 children in Scotland were looked after or on the Child Protection Register — 1.5% of Scotland's under 18 population. There were 12,596 looked after children in Scotland, a decrease of 5% from 31 July 2021.

All children and young people need the same things to be successful and thrive in life but unfortunately those who are care experienced have not been afforded the same supports for this to take place.

In August 2023, the Scottish Government published information on attainment and leaver destinations, for school leavers in Scotland who were looked after during the 2021–22 school year. Headline figures show that more care experienced children are staying in school for longer and achieving higher qualifications than the previous year. However, there are still large gaps compared with all learners.

The latest figures show that:

- ◆ Care experienced school leavers continue to have lower attainment than other school leavers.
- ◆ Care experienced children and young people leave school earlier than their non-care-experienced peers.
- ◆ Care experienced children are less likely to be in positive destinations nine months after leaving school.
- ◆ The rate of exclusions among care experienced children is much higher than among the general school population.
- ◆ The more disruption a child faces — for example placement moves — the higher their likelihood of exclusion.
- ◆ Figures show that at all levels, care experienced students have lower rates of course completion at university and college than other students.
- ◆ Care experienced children are automatically deemed to have additional support needs, unless otherwise assessed. Despite this, around half of care experienced children have not been assessed for a co-ordinated support plan, even though they are entitled in law. (Govan Law Centre, 2015).

On 31 July 2022, the most common placements were:

- ◆ 33% (4,467) were living with foster carers
- ◆ 21% (2,859) were living at home with parents
- ◆ 34% (4,399) were living with kinship carers (friends and relatives)
- ◆ 10% (1,286) were living in residential accommodation
- ◆ 1% (156) were living with prospective adopters

Source: Scottish Government: [Children's Social Work Statistics Scotland 2021–22](#)

# Developing our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26

Our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26 commitments have been informed by:

- ◆ our previous plan and commitments
- ◆ our successes and areas we need to continue to deliver and improve
- ◆ [The Promise](#) and [Plan 21–24](#)
- ◆ evidence of inequality for care experienced people
- ◆ considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges care experienced people faced
- ◆ [Who Care's Scotland's written evidence to inform the review of education](#)
- ◆ ongoing employee and stakeholder engagement
- ◆ engagement with SQA's Corporate Parenting Steering Group
- ◆ [Skills Development Scotland's Equality Evidence Review \(2021\)](#)
- ◆ UNCRC and children's rights responsibilities and consideration of progress against SQA's corporate parenting commitments and:
  - equality and Children's Rights And Wellbeing Impact Assessments
  - [equality outcomes 2021–25](#)
  - Young Talent Strategy
  - [Corporate Plan 2020–23](#)
  - [Gaelic Language Plan 2022–25](#)
  - BSL commitments

As we reflect on the progress we have made since the [SQA Corporate Parenting Report 2019–22](#), we have identified areas for improvement and these are reflected in this Corporate Parenting Plan and commitments for 2023–26.

Our revised plan details the outcomes we will work towards and the action we will take to meet our responsibilities and make a difference to the lives of Scotland's care experienced children, young people and adults.

# Governance, monitoring and reporting

SQA's Board of Management exercises its duty to ensure compliance. An important part of the board's role in governance is ensuring that care experience is reflected in our strategic planning and strategy. SQA's chief executive is accountable for the fulfilment of SQA's corporate parenting responsibilities and is supported in this by SQA's Executive Management Team and Corporate Parenting Steering Group.

## Governance model and groups

In 2022, we launched a new governance model to ensure decision-making happens at the right level and place in SQA, while living our corporate values of being trusted, enabling and progressive. Our new governance model is led by SQA's Executive Management Team and supported by our Management Team. These groups provide assurance to Scottish Government, Audit Committee, Performance Committee, and the Board of Management. Terms of reference for each of SQA's Governance Groups have been agreed to outline their responsibilities.

Our Corporate Parenting Steering Group (CPSG) meets quarterly and reports to SQA's Equality Steering Group. We will continue to host quarterly CPSG meetings to monitor the progress against our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26 and to report to our Equality Steering Group and governance groups. We will regularly review membership of our CPSG to ensure representation from across the business to support monitoring and development of our corporate parenting action plans.

## Reporting

Scottish Ministers may call on us at any time to report our progress. We will continue to respond to these requests and report again formally in 2026.

## Contacts

Joanne Lawrie, Equality and Diversity Manager  
[Joanne.Lawrie@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Joanne.Lawrie@sqa.org.uk)

Denise Rooney, Corporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager  
[Denise.Rooney@sqa.org.uk](mailto:Denise.Rooney@sqa.org.uk)

# Our corporate parenting commitments 2023–26

Our commitments for 2023–26 highlight our key priorities as a corporate parent over the next three years.

**Outcome 1:** SQA employees understand the needs of care experienced people, our corporate parenting responsibilities, and how to be a good corporate parent in practice.

Relates to UNCRC article 3 — Best Interest of the Child.

We will:

- 1.1 review our employee induction programme to ensure it is up to date and fit for purpose so that new employees receive information about SQA's Corporate Parenting Plan and our responsibilities as they join the organisation
- 1.2 review our corporate parenting training and roll out mandatory online training to all staff to raise awareness of the needs of care experienced people, SQA's Corporate Parenting Plan and our corporate parenting responsibilities
- 1.3 conduct a training-needs analysis to review and plan corporate parenting training requirements for specific teams across SQA
- 1.4 work in partnership with Who Cares? Scotland to develop and deliver training to SQA appointees, senior leaders and board members, reiterating our legislative responsibilities as a corporate parent, and the impact care experience has
- 1.5 measure the uptake and completion rates of training delivered to report on our training activities, and the impact on staff and corporate parenting work
- 1.6 continue to develop our internal corporate parenting intranet site and Equality Evidence Knowledge Hub
- 1.7 identify and use opportunities for collaboration and partnership with other corporate parents to share good practice
- 1.8 develop a detailed annual communications plan to continue to promote awareness of our responsibilities and progress against our commitments, and to celebrate important dates
- 1.9 share case studies of good corporate parenting practice as part of our communications plan
- 1.10 promote volunteering opportunities to support the aspirations, and raise the profile, of care experienced people
- 1.11 continue and expand on our partnership work with Who Cares? Scotland and MCR Pathways



**Outcome 2:** The voice of care experienced people is at the heart of SQA decision-making.

Relates to UNCRC article 12 — Right to be Heard, article 28 — Right to Education, article 29 — Goals of Education.

We will:

- 2.1 scope where SQA policies, practices and guidance can better support those who are care experienced
- 2.2 scope our relationships with organisations who represent those who are care experienced and build on these links
- 2.3 continue to use the equality impact assessment process to evaluate the impact of our policy and practice on individuals who are care experienced
- 2.4 make use of existing fora to ensure the voice and needs of people with care experience inform our decision-making
- 2.5 explore opportunities to develop trauma-informed practice to assist us in the development of our policy and guidance
- 2.6 engage with Who Cares? Scotland to gain their insight into where the learner journey is significantly challenging for care experienced people and to ensure we understand their needs
- 2.7 pursue partnership opportunities that allow us to hear the voice of care experienced people to ensure their needs are determined and inform education reform
- 2.8 deliver for, and listen, to care experienced learners as we prepare for the transition to the new qualifications body in 2025
- 2.9 explore formation of a collaboration group to bring corporate parents and representatives across the education sector together to share good practice and co-ordinate activities to fulfil our duties to care experienced people. This may include a range of local authorities, Scottish Funding Council, Sports Scotland, Police Scotland, Fire & Rescue Scotland, Creative Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig, Scottish Social Services Council, Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland and the Educational Institute of Scotland
- 2.10 ensure our responsibilities to care experienced people are reflected in SQA's Children's Rights Framework that will be developed for the new qualifications body in 2025
- 2.11 monitor the progress of the UNCRC (Incorporation) Scotland Bill as it makes its way through parliament and ensure we are working towards the goal of making Scotland the best place in the world to grow up

**Outcome 3:** The ambition and achievements of care experienced people are celebrated, recognised and acknowledged.

Relates to UNCRC article 3 — Best Interest of the Child, article 12 — Right to be Heard, article 28 — Right to Education, article 29 — Goals of Education.

We will:

- 3.1 invite feedback from care experienced people through an online survey to inform how we recognise and celebrate their achievements
- 3.2 as proud corporate parents, recognise the ambition and achievements of care experienced learners on results day each year
- 3.3 hold an annual in-person event to celebrate the achievements of all care experienced learners, across all qualifications
- 3.4 explore development of a toolkit to support and encourage SQA centres to celebrate and recognise the achievements of all care experienced learners
- 3.5 continue to demonstrate and celebrate the success of people with experience of care through the publication of case studies to inspire other learners

**Outcome 4:** Our collection and use of evidence and data are improved and used to ensure that care experienced people benefit from access to a range of SQA services designed to meet their needs.

Relates to UNCRC article 3 — Best Interest of the Child, article 12 — Right to be Heard, article 28 — Right to Education.

We will:

- 4.1 improve the collection and use of evidence and data on care experienced people to inform our policy, planning and practice
- 4.2 enhance opportunities for care experienced learners to contribute to the development of SQA products and services
- 4.3 when designing qualifications, ensure the views of care experienced people are considered so that their care needs can be met
- 4.4 ensure SQA fully understands the lifelong impact of care experience and continue to act as a corporate parent to anyone with care experience who beyond the age of 26
- 4.5 explore how we can create more tailored and accessible information and support for care experienced learners
- 4.6 demonstrate opportunities to embed destigmatising language and practices across the way we work
- 4.7 promote and encourage supportive assessment practices for care experienced learners
- 4.8 promote awareness and engagement with the teacher resource created in collaboration with Who Cares? Scotland to provide Scotland's teachers with insight into the lives of care experienced learners
- 4.9 produce an accessible language version of our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26 that speaks directly to the care experienced community

**Outcome 5:** There are opportunities for those who are care experienced to develop skills, experience and employment with SQA.

Relates to UNCRC article 3 — Best Interest of the Child.

We will:

- 5.1 understand the barriers care experienced people face in relation to employment and take measures to develop the support they need to gain employment and thrive in the workplace
- 5.2 develop employment support for line managers
- 5.3 make use of our Young Talent Strategy and develop recruitment campaigns that support care experienced young people to access career opportunities in SQA
- 5.4 use external agencies to effectively promote young talent programmes as routes to employment for care experienced young people
- 5.5 work with MCR Pathways to support their mentoring programme
- 5.6 work with external agencies who support care experienced young people to provide paid work experience, where possible

## Findings from our consultation

An important part of developing our Corporate Parenting Plan is listening to care experienced people, collaborating with partners, other corporate parents and organisations across Scotland.

Public consultation of our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26 took place for six weeks in September and October 2023, to consult stakeholders and gather views on our proposed outcomes and commitments. Our consultation was published on SQA’s website and shared via social media and a direct mailing list to encourage participation and response. Responses were received from 27 internal SQA staff and 7 external stakeholders. Responses from these groups were analysed and have been reflected in our Plan for 2023–26 and commitments.

Overall, all but one of the respondents to our consultation agreed that that the commitments we identified are the correct ones.

A summary of changes we have made to our Plan following consultation to:

- ◆ ensure there is regular promotion of SQA’s corporate parenting practice and progress (relates to commitment 1.8)
- ◆ update the Language Matters section and include information about trauma-informed practice (relates to commitment 2.5)
- ◆ adopt good practice and replace reference in the plan to ‘children and young people’ with ‘care experienced people’, or ‘individuals with care experience’
- ◆ ensure consideration of the use of the [Reframing Toolkit](#) developed by [Each and Every Child](#) which provides evidence-based guidance on framing care experience in a non-stigmatising way

- ◆ ensure that it is clear from our commitments and action plans how people with care experience will be included in discussions around education reform and how this will be achieved (relates to commitment 2.7 and the [Education Reform section](#) on page 8)
- ◆ identify and name those corporate parents we will proactively collaborate with and engage with (relates to commitment 2.9)
- ◆ take measures to invite feedback and understand how care experienced people would like their achievements celebrated and to explore the need to recognise, acknowledge and celebrate the full range of learners' achievements (relates to commitment 3.1)
- ◆ ensure consideration is given to the needs of care experienced learners through research or other consultation activities (relates to commitment 4.1)
- ◆ explore more support for care experienced young people in securing employment with SQA (relates to commitment 5.1)

Following publication of our Corporate Parenting Plan 2023–26, we will develop detailed action plans setting out timescales and milestones to achieve our commitments. We will ensure the detailed findings from our consultation are considered and used to inform this work.

We aim to seek the views of care experienced people as our commitments and actions are developed into more detailed work plans and will continue to gather feedback, both internally and externally.

We are grateful to everyone who took the time to respond to our consultation and who shared their feedback with us. Thank you.